

Frequently Asked Questions: Garden Waste Collection 2020/2021

Why do we now have to pay for a service which was previously provided free of charge?

In 2012 we introduced a separate kerbside collection service for garden waste to reduce the amount of waste being taken to landfill. At that time, we asked for a one- off payment to cover the cost of purchasing a brown bin. The scheme was very successful with over 15,500 households taking part. Unlike household waste, local authorities are not required to collect garden waste. Due to pressures placed on our budgets as a result of austerity measures, it simply became unaffordable to continue to provide the service without a charge. We consulted with existing users of the service and 87.5% of respondents said that they would rather pay for the service than lose it. We have worked hard to ensure that the costs of the service are as low as possible so that we can provide you with an alternative, efficient and effective way of disposing of your garden waste.

How much does the service cost?

You can use your existing brown bin or there is a £25 charge for the purchase of a new bin. The charge to receive the garden waste service is £45 per annum for the first bin and £20 per annum for a second and any subsequent bins. That works out at just £2.25 per single bin collection – or, spread over a year just .87 pence a week. If you sign up part way through the season, you will still be charged the same fee.

Why has the service increased?

The Council has had to make a difficult decision to increase its garden waste charges, the increase represents 75p per collection. This is the first price increase in four years, but regrettably the service is not sustainable at the same price as when it was launched in 2016. We have faced, as other businesses have, increases in our operating costs such as fuel, wages and services. Local authorities have also experienced year on year reductions in funding from Central Government, at the same time we have a statutory duty to deliver a balanced budget. We have already made £3million savings over recent years, and we are projecting a further £855,000 saving requirement in 2021/2022. The garden waste service is a discretionary service, it is not funded by Council Tax. We offer the opt-in service funded by subscribers to the service, to provide a convenient and efficient means for people to dispose of their green waste.

When do I have to pay by?

You need to pay by 1st April 2020 to receive the garden waste collection service for 2020/2021.

Will my service last a year from the date I signed up?

No, if you decide to purchase the service part way through the year, the cost will still be £45 for the collection of one bin and £20 for each additional bin and payment will be valid until the 31st March the following year.

How many collections will I receive?

We will collect your brown bin(s) 20 times a year between April and November. For 2020, we will collect your garden waste on alternate weeks, either on your green bin week or blue bin week, between week commencing 01 April 2020 and week commencing 23 November 2020. Your garden waste collection will then resume 22 February 2021 until 31 March 2021.

Where do I find out when my collections are?

Please visit bins.boston.gov.uk and type in your postcode or street address and you will be presented with information showing your next collection day. You can also give us a call on 01205 311112.

How do I join the garden waste collection service?

Those customers who signed up for the service by direct debit for 2019 will be automatically renewed for this years' service unless they have cancelled their direct debit payment. Those customers who signed up for the service in 2019 online who provided us with a valid email address will be contacted via email with an invitation to join the service for 2020. This will be a simple joining process.

For those customers who signed up in person or over the telephone and did not provide a valid email address, there will be notifications of how to re-join the scheme through social media, the local press, our website and your council tax bill.

If you are new to the scheme for 2020, you can sign up online either by direct debit or card payment now by visiting <https://www.mybostonuk.com/gardenwaste/> where you can also purchase a new brown bin at the cost of £25. If you do not have access to the internet, you can also call us on 01205 311112 or visit our reception at Municipal Buildings, West Street, Boston. You can pay for the service by debit or credit card, cash or direct debit. Updates to your garden waste service will be publicised on the Boston Borough Council website, social media and local press.

Do I have to buy my brown bin from Boston Borough Council?

Yes, we are not able to empty bins which have not been supplied by us. Bins need to meet specific standards and be of a quality and type suitable for our bin lifts to empty them safely. We have no way of determining if a bin supplied by a customer meets required standards. We will also not be able to replace any bins which we damage if you buy your own bin.

What time do I need to put my bin out by?

Please present your bins at the kerbside with the handles facing outwards on the night before your collection, or by the latest 5.30am on the morning of your collection. Unfortunately we are unable to return to collect bins which are not presented at the time of collection. We have recently amended some of our collection routes which may mean the time your bin gets emptied will be different to your usual time of collection.

I am on an assisted collection, will my brown bin be collected in the same way as my green and blue bins?

Yes, if you are registered on our system as an Assisted Collection customer, our crews will know to collect your brown bin(s) at the agreed collection point.

What happens if you miss my bin?

If you have presented your bin for collection by 5.30am on the morning of your collection and we genuinely miss this, we will return to collect your bin as soon as we practicably can. This will usually be within a week. You can report a missed bin by calling 01205 311112. Please leave your bin at the kerbside so that we can collect it. If your bin(s) is not presented by 5.30am, then our crews will record this on their in- cab terminals as 'not out'. We will not return to collect bins which have not been presented on time. Our collection vehicles are also fitted with CCTV cameras and we may carry out checks on bins which have been reported as missed, we do this to make sure our resources are being used effectively and that we can respond to enquiries more effectively.

You have collected my brown bin but there is garden waste still in it?

The bin lifts fitted to our vehicles automatically detect any waste left over in the bin after it has been tipped. If waste is detected, the system will automatically re-lift the bin and shake it a number of times to try and empty all the waste. Occasionally if garden waste has become so compacted in the bin, particularly at the bottom, no matter how many times the bin is shaken, the waste will not come out. Our crews will not attempt to free up waste stuck in the bin. On these occasions, we will ask you to free up the waste to make sure it is all loose and then present the bin at your next collection. We will not return to collect a bin if the waste has not been emptied.

I currently share my brown bin with a neighbour, can I still do this?

We understand it makes sense for people to share a bin especially if both parties do not generate much garden waste. It will be a matter for you to discuss this with your neighbour. One of you will need to make a payment to receive the service, it will be your decision as to whether you want to share the costs of this with your neighbour. These are private arrangements and we are unable to be involved in this.

What do I do if my brown bin is stolen?

You should contact us by email at gardenwaste@boston.gov.uk or call us on 01205 311112 and you can purchase a new bin at £25. If you have already paid for the collection service, you will not need to pay for this again and we will send you out a new sticker. We also recommend you report the theft to Lincolnshire Police on 101.

My brown bin is damaged, can I get it repaired or replaced?

If your bin becomes damaged via the collection process we will repair or replace it free of charge, as soon as is reasonably practical. If the bin is damaged through neglect or misuse, e.g. too heavy, or due to age, the cost of repair or replacement will be chargeable to you. If your bin is damaged, email us to report it at gardenwaste@boston.gov.uk or call us on 01205 311112.

Why do I need a sticker and what do I do with it?

If you are new to the service for 2020, the sticker we send you needs to be fixed firmly to the back of the bin(s) just below the handles. If you are renewing your service for 2020, you will have a different coloured sticker to your previous one and this MUST be placed underneath the handle ensuring your white sticker is still visible. You should clean this area thoroughly with hot soapy water and allow it to dry before you apply your sticker. Your sticker has a blank section in the middle for your address; on here you should write in permanent marker pen, your house number / house name, street name and postcode. This information is needed to ensure your bin is serviced and our crews return your bin to the right property. A sticker is required to show our crews that you have purchased the service, our crews will not collect any brown bins which do not display a valid sticker. We also recommend you write your house number / house name on the front of the bin, this allows our CCTV to see your bin being emptied and helps deal with enquiries relating to damage or missed collections. If you pay for more than one bin to be serviced, you will need to apply a sticker to each bin. The sticker(s) we send you will be included in your welcome pack letter.

My sticker is lost and you have not collected my brown bin, what do I do?

Our collection crews are instructed to only collect brown bins which display a valid garden waste sticker. If your sticker is not visible on your bin, unfortunately we will be unable to collect it. You should report your missing sticker to us by emailing gardenwaste@boston.gov.uk or call us on 01205 311112 and we will arrange to send you out a new sticker.

I have moved address but would like you to collect my brown bin, what do I do?

If you move you should take your brown bin with you. You should notify us as soon as you have moved so that we can update our records and arrange to collect your bin(s) at your new address. We will issue you a new sticker which you will need to apply to your bin(s), replacing your old sticker. If you do not notify us

of your change of address, we will not be able to collect your bin. You should notify us by email at gardenwaste@boston.gov.uk or call us on 01205 311112.

I no longer want to receive the garden waste service, can I get a refund?

Unfortunately we are unable to give a refund should you decide part way through a service you no longer need it.

What happens if I die part way through the service, can my family receive a refund or can my estate be credited with a refund?

If you die during the period you have paid for the service, then a pro-rata refund for the annual service charge only will be made to your estate, or to an individual who has been identified as being granted probate. The refund will be pro-rata from the next whole month after the date of your death. Unfortunately we cannot give a refund to someone else without satisfying the necessary legal requirements.

What happens to my garden waste once it is collected?

We collect your garden waste and take it to a waste transfer station, it is then loaded into trailers and transported to an end processor for composting. The compost produced from your garden waste is sold by the end processor and has a variety of uses in the horticultural and agricultural sectors. We do not receive any income from the sale of compost, we only collect it as the Waste Collection Authority. Lincolnshire County Council as the Waste Disposal Authority is responsible for the disposal of garden waste. Lincolnshire County Council is charged by the end processor for each tonne of garden waste tipped, this is referred to as a gate fee.

I do not want a wheeled bin at my property but I want to take part in the garden waste collection service, can I do this?

Unfortunately not, all garden waste needs to be put loose in the brown bin purchased from Boston Borough Council.

Can I put garden waste in my green bin?

No, there is a strict ban on garden waste in the green bin. Our crews will check bins which they suspect may have garden waste, they will do this by observing bags or loose garden waste, particularly at the bottom or middle of the bin. If a green bin is found to contain garden waste, it will be rejected and will not be emptied. We will ask the householder to remove the garden waste and dispose of it properly and then represent the bin for collection on the next scheduled collection. We need to ensure collected residual waste (green bin) has not been contaminated. It no longer goes to environmentally-unfriendly landfill but to the Energy from Waste Plant in North Hykeham to generate electricity.

Can I put extra garden waste out for collection in bags?

No, garden waste must be contained in the brown bins with the lid firmly closed. If the bin lid is ajar or open, this could damage our collection equipment and injure

our crews. We ask that if you regularly generate more garden waste than your bin(s) can cope with, then you might want to consider purchasing another bin. You can do this online by visiting www.boston.gov.uk/gardenwaste or by calling us on 01205 311112.

I do not want to take part in the service but I have a brown bin, will you buy this back from me?

You might want to consider selling your bin on sites such as Facebook buy it sell it swap it, streetlife, eBay or other similar websites designed for private selling. There may be a local market for this as it might be you could sell your bin for less than it would cost for us to provide a new bin. Boston Borough Council will not buy brown bins back from customers.

How do I enter the free prize draw for a free service?

You need to sign up to the garden waste service online by visiting <https://www.mybostonuk.com/gardenwaste/> and complete the online form and pay by Direct Debit. You should answer correctly a simple question relating to garden waste and you will be automatically entered into the prize draw. If you do not answer the question or answer it incorrectly, you will not be entered into the prize draw. We will select at random 10 customers who correctly answered the question and will then pay those customers £45.00, representing the value of the first brown bin collection. Please note that to be entered into the draw, you will need to sign up by direct debit before 01 April 2020. Winners will be announced shortly after this date.

Will there be more fly-tipping?

It is a common concern that fly-tipping will increase as a result of the introduction of charges for garden waste collections. Since the chargeable garden waste collection service was first introduced, the Council has not experienced a reportable link between the charge and an increase in fly tipping of garden waste. We monitor fly-tipping incidents and take action where necessary. Fly-tipping is a criminal offence with a maximum fine of £50,000, offenders can also receive a custodial sentence.

If I do not want to have a brown bin how can I dispose of my garden waste?

You can compost your garden waste in your own property, for more information on how to do this visit <http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/recycle-for-lincolnshire/garden-waste/home-composting>. You can also take your garden waste to the Household Waste Recycling Centre at Bittern Way, Wyberton for free.